

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 141272
ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /011 R

66011

DRAFTED BY: AF/C:RKATES

APPROVED BY: AF/C:LJUNIOR

-----071056 040200Z /73

O 040140Z JUN 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USCINCEUR IMMEDIATE

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USNMR SHAPE IMMEDIATE

JCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE

DOD WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CINCUSAFE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 141272

FOLLOWING REPEAT LAGOS 6852 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO
BONN, BRUSSELS, DAR ES SALAAM, HAVANA, KINSHASA, LIBREVILLE,
LONDON, LUSAKA, MAPUTO, MOSCOW, PARIS, TUNIS, USUN NEW YORK
02 JUN 78

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 6852

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CG, NI, CU, UR

SUBJECT: TALKING POINTS ON US INVOLVEMENT IN SHABA

REF: (A) STATE 139677, (B) LAGOS 6795, (C) LAGOS 6833

1. SUMMARY. COMMENTS OF MEA OFFICIALS TO THE CHARGE
ON JUNE 2 IN RESPONSE TO THE TALKING POINTS SET FORTH
IN REFTTEL A INDICATED THAT THE FMG WOULD NOT WELCOME
AN INTER-AFRICAN FORCE FOR THE DEFENSE OF SHABA
WHICH WAS ORGANIZED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE FRENCH
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PAGE 02 STATE 141272

OR OF THE WEST. IT APPEARS, HOWEVER, THAT THE FMG
COULD SUPPORT SUCH A FORCE IF IT WERE ORGANIZED
UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE OAU, EVEN THOUGH ITS LOGISTICAL
SUPPORT WAS PROVIDED BY THE WEST. THE SUGGESTION WAS
ADVANCED THAT MOBUTU DISCUSS WITH BONGO THE BEST WAY
OF BRINGING THE OAU INTO THE ACT. THE COMMENTS OF
MEA OFFICIALS REFLECTED SOME UNDERSTANDING OF US

LOGISTICAL SUPPORT OF THE FRENCH-BELGIAN RESCUE OPERATION IN SHABA DESPITE THEIR DISTASTE FOR THAT OPERATION. END SUMMARY.

2. WITH MEA'S AFRICA DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR AKADIRI BEING UNAVAILABLE AT THE TIME, CHARGE ON JUNE 2 DISCUSSED THE USG ATTITUDE TOWARD THE UPCOMING JUNE 5 PARIS MEETING ALONG THE LINES OF REFTTEL WITH DR. FAFOWARA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THAT DEPARTMENT. FAFOWARA SAID THAT HE WOULD PASS THE INFORMATION TO HIGHER AUTHORITY. HE ADDED THAT, ALTHOUGH HE COULDN'T REALLY SPEAK OFFICIALLY FOR HIS GOVERNMENT, HE WAS VERY DOUBTFUL WHETHER THE FMG WOULD LOOK FAVORABLY UPON THE TYPE OF INTER-AFRICAN DEFENSE FORCE FOR SHABA PROPOSED BY THE FRENCH. HE SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME DISCUSSION IN THE FMG REGARDING THE POSSIBILITY OF TRANSFORMING THAT PROPOSAL FOR THE BETTER BY ORGANIZING AN OAU INTER-AFRICAN FORCE.

3. CHARGE EMPHASIZED TO FAFOWARA THAT THE USG WOULD BE VERY MUCH INTERESTED IF THE FMG WISHED TO PROVIDE ITS OFFICIAL VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT TO THE EMBASSY.

4. CHARGE THEN CALLED ON BRONSON DEDE, THE PERSONAL ASSISTANT OF COMMISSIONER GARBA, AND WENT OVER THE SAME TALKING POINTS. DEDE SAID HE WOULD PASS THEM

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 141272

ON TO THE COMMISSIONER, WHO WOULD BE LEAVING LAGOS JUNE 5 TO ACCOMPANY OBASANJO ON HIS VISITS TO WARSAW AND BUCHAREST.

5. DEDE COMMENTED THAT THE FRENCH HAD LONG HAD IN MIND THE IDEA OF AN INTER-AFRICAN FORCE SUPPORTED BY FRANCE WHICH COULD DEAL WITH SITUATIONS SUCH AS SHABA THROUGHOUT AFRICA. THE FMG HAS LONG TAKEN A DIM VIEW OF FRENCH INTENTIONS IN THIS REGARD AND GARBA TOLD THE FRENCH PRESIDENT SO LAST YEAR IN PARIS. DEDE SAID THE FMG HAS NOT CHANGED IN THIS REGARD AND THAT IT STILL CANNOT WELCOME THE CREATION OF AN INTER-AFRICAN FORCE UNDER FRENCH AEGIS. THERE WOULD BE A GREAT DOMESTIC POLITICAL OUTCRY IF IT ATTEMPTED TO DO SO.

6. WHEN THE CHARGE INQUIRED WHETHER THIS WOULD BE TRUE OF AN INTER-AFRICAN FORCE UNDER WESTERN RATHER THAN FRENCH AEGIS, DEDE SAID THAT HE THOUGHT SO. IN RESPONSE TO ANOTHER QUESTION, HOWEVER, HE SAID THAT IT WOULD BE THE WESTERN AEGIS WHICH WAS UNACCEPTABLE, NOT THE LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FROM THE WEST WHICH WOULD

OBVIOUSLY HAVE TO BACK UP ANY INTER-AFRICAN FORCE.

7. DEDE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE THOUGHT AN INTER-AFRICAN FORCE WOULD BE ACCEPTED BY NIGERIA IF IT OPERATED "SOMEHOW UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE OAU." WHEN THE CHARGE EXPRESSED SOME DOUBTS WHETHER THIS COULD IN FACT BE ARRANGED, DEDE CONTENDED THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT BUT NEVERTHELESS POSSIBLE. HE COULD NOT HIMSELF DESCRIBE JUST HOW IT COULD BE DONE BUT HE SUGGESTED IN THIS REGARD THAT MOBUTU SEEK ADVICE FROM BONGO AS TO HOW IT COULD BE ARRANGED.

8. DEDE SAID THE FMG UNDERSTOOD THE HUMANITARIAN
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PAGE 04 STATE 141272

REASONS WHY THE USG HAD PROVIDED LOGISTICAL SUPPORT TO THE BELGIAN-FRENCH OPERATION IN SHABA AND THAT GARBA HAD TAKEN THAT INTO ACCOUNT IN HIS MAY 30 BBC INTERVIEW.

9. AT ONE POINT IN THE CONVERSATION DEDE POPPED INTO GARBA'S OFFICE FOR A MINUTE OR SO. WHEN HE RETURNED HE SAID HE HAD MENTIONED THE ONGOING CONVERSATION TO GARBA AND THAT GRABA HAD COMMENTED THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO PLACE ANY INTER-AFRICAN FORCE FOR SHABA UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE OAU.

10. COMMENT: WE NOTE THAT THE COMMENTS MADE BY FAFOWARA AND DEDE ACCORD WELL WITH THE POSITION WHICH OBASANJO RECENTLY TOOK WITH MOBUTU'S SPECIAL ENVOY (REFTEL B) AND THE REMARKS WHICH GARBA MADE ON MAY 30 IN A BBC-TV INTERVIEW (REFTEL C).

11. NEITHER FAFOWARA NOR DEDE EXPRESSED IRRITATION THAT THE US WAS GIVING SERIOUS THOUGHT TO THE FRENCH PROPOSAL. BOTH OF THEM DISPLAYED INTEREST WHETHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES OTHER THAN FRANCOPHONE ONES WOULD PARTICIPATE IN SUCH A FORCE AND BOTH OF THEM OBVIOUSLY HOPED THAT THE US WOULD USE ITS INFLUENCE TO BROADEN THE CONCEPT OF AN INTER-AFRICAN FORCE FOR SHABA WELL BEYOND THE PREVIOUS THINKING OF THE FRENCH AND THE FRANCOPHONE STATES.
WYMAN

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTERVENTION, BRIEFING MATERIALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE141272
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: AF/C:RKATES
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780233-0519
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780698/aaaadgmi.tel
Line Count: 166
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f339be92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 139677, 78 LAGOS 6795, 78 LAGOS 6833
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2497238
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TALKING POINTS ON US INVOLVEMENT IN SHABA
TAGS: MOPS, CG, NI, CU, UR, US
To: USCINCEUR CINCMAC MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f339be92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014